



BHAGAVAD GITA

KISARI MOHAN GANGULI



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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

It is with great pleasure and reverence that we present this free EPUB edition of the Bhagavad Gita, translated by the distinguished Kisari Mohan Ganguli. This timeless scripture, which forms chapters 25-42 of the sixth Parva (Bhishma Parva) of the Mahabharata, stands as a cornerstone of spiritual literature, offering profound insights into the nature of duty, righteousness, and the eternal truths of life.

Kisari Mohan Ganguli's translation of the Mahabharata, from which this Bhagavad Gita is extracted, is renowned for its fidelity to the original Sanskrit text. His meticulous work provides an invaluable window into the epic's rich tapestry of narrative and philosophy. In presenting this edition, we have chosen to maintain the integrity of Ganguli's translation while making it more accessible to contemporary readers.

To enhance readability, we have supplied chapter headings that were not part of the original translation. These headings serve as guides to the central themes and dialogues within each chapter, facilitating a deeper understanding of the text. Additionally, we have not included the footnotes that accompany the original translation. While these annotations provide significant scholarly value, their exclusion here is intended to ensure a more seamless reading experience.

The Bhagavad Gita's teachings have inspired countless individuals over the centuries, offering wisdom that

transcends cultural and temporal boundaries. It is our hope that this edition will continue to enlighten and inspire readers, fostering a greater appreciation of the timeless wisdom contained within its verses.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Kisari Mohan Ganguli for his remarkable translation and to all who have contributed to making this edition possible. May the light of the Bhagavad Gita illuminate the path for all who seek knowledge and truth.

Amritendu Mukhopadhyay
31st July 2024

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C H A P T E R

1

ARJUNA'S GRIEF

Dhritarashtra said,—“Assembled together on the sacred plain of Kurukshetra from desire of fighting what did my sons and the Pandavas do, O Sanjaya.”

Sanjaya said,—“Beholding the army of the Pandavas arrayed, king Duryodhana, approaching the preceptor (Drona) said these words: ‘Behold, O preceptor, this vast army of the son of Pandu, arrayed by Drupada’s son (Dhrishtadyumna), thy intelligent disciple. There (in that army) are many brave and mighty bowmen, who in battle are equal to Bhima and Arjuna. (They are) Yuyudhana, and Virata, and that mighty car-warrior Drupada, and Dhrishtaketu, and Chekitana, and the ruler of Kasi endued with great energy; and Purujit, and Kuntibhoja, and Saivya that bull among men; and Yudhamanyu of great prowess, and Uttamaujas of great energy; and Subhadra’s son, and the sons of Draupadi, all of whom are mighty car-warriors. Hear, however, O best of regenerate ones, who are the distinguished ones among us, the leaders of the army. I will name them to thee for (thy) information. (They are) thyself, and Bhishma, and Karna, and Kripa who is ever victorious; and Aswatthaman and Vikarna, and Saumadatta, and Jayadratha. Besides these, are many heroic warriors, prepared to lay down their lives for my sake, armed with diverse kinds of weapons, and all accomplished in battle.

Our army, therefore, protected by Bhishma, is insufficient. This force, however, of these (the Pandavas), protected by Bhima, is sufficient. Stationing yourselves then in the entrances of the divisions that have been assigned to you, all of you protect Bhishma alone.’—(Just at this time) the valiant and venerable grandsire of the Kurus, affording great joy to him (Duryodhana) by loudly uttering a leonine roar, blew (his) conch. Then conches and drums and cymbals and horns were sounded at once and the noise (made) became a loud uproar. Then Madhava and Pandu’s son (Arjuna), both stationed on a great car unto which were yoked white steeds, blew their celestial conches. And Hrishikesa blew (the conch called) Panchajanya and Dhananjaya (that called) Devadatta; and Vrikodara of terrible deeds blew the huge conch (called) Paundra. And Kunti’s son king Yudhishtira blew (the conch called) Anantavijaya; while Nakula and Sahadeva, (those conches called respectively) Sughosa and Manipushpaka. And that splendid bowman, the ruler of Kasi and that mighty car-warrior, Sikhandin, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, and that unvanquished Satyaki, and Drupada, and the sons of Draupadi, and the mighty-armed son of Subhadra—all these, O lord of earth, severally blew their conches. And that blare, loudly reverberating through the welkin, and the earth, rent the hearts of the Dhartarashtras. Then beholding the Dhartarashtra troops drawn up, the ape-bannered son of Pandu, rising his bow, when, the throwing of missiles had just commenced, said these words, O lord of earth, to Hrishikesa.

“Arjuna said,—‘O thou that knoweth no deterioration, place my car (once) between the two armies, so that I may observe these that stand here desirous of battle, and with whom I shall have to contend in the labours of this struggle. I will observe those who are assembled here and

who are prepared to fight for doing what is agreeable in battle to the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.”

Sanjaya continued,—“Thus addressed by Gudakesa, O Bharata, Hrishikesa, placing that excellent car between the two armies, in view of Bhishma and Drona and all the kings of the earth, said,—‘Behold, O Partha these assembled Kurus,’—And there the son of Pritha beheld, standing (his) sires and grandsons, and friends, and father-in-law and well-wishers, in both the armies. Beholding all those kinsmen standing (there), the son of Kunti, possessed by excessive pity, despondingly said (these words).”

“Arjuna said,—‘Beholding these kinsmen, O Krishna, assembled together and eager for the fight, my limbs become languid, and my mouth becomes dry. My body trembles, and my hair stands on end. Gandiva slips from my hand, and my skin burns. I am unable to stand (any longer); my mind seems to wander. I behold adverse omens, too, O Kesava. I do not desire victory, O Krishna, not sovereignty, nor pleasures. Of what use would sovereignty be to us, O Govinda, or enjoyments, or even life, since they, for whose sake sovereignty, enjoyments, and pleasures are desired by us, are here arrayed for battle ready to give up life and wealth, viz., preceptors, sires, sons and grandsires, maternal uncles, father-in-laws, grandsons, brother-in-laws, and kinsmen. I wish not to slay these though they slay me, O slayer of Madhu, even for the sake of the sovereignty of the three worlds, what then for the sake of (this) earth? What gratification can be ours, O Janardana, by slaying the Dhartarashtras? Even if they be regarded as foes, sin will overtake us if we slay them. Therefore, it behoveth us not to slay the sons of Dhritarashtra who are our own kinsmen. How, O Madhava can we be happy by killing our own kinsmen? Even if these, with judgments perverted by avarice, do not see the evil that ariseth from

the extermination of a race, and the sin of internecine quarrels, why should not we, O Janardana, who see the evils of the extermination of a race, learn to abstain from that sin? A race being destroyed, the eternal customs of that race are lost; and upon those customs being lost, sin overpowers the whole race. From the predominance of sin, O Krishna, the women of that race become corrupt. And the women becoming corrupt, an intermingling of castes happeneth, O descendant of Vrishni. This intermingling of castes leadeth to hell both the destroyer of the race and the race itself. The ancestors of those fall (from heaven), their rites of pinda and water ceasing. By these sins of destroyers of races, causing intermixture of castes, the rules of caste and the eternal rites of families become extinct. We have heard, O Janardana, that men whose family rites become extinct, ever dwell in hell. Alas, we have resolved to perpetrate a great sin, for we are ready to slay our own kinsmen from lust of the sweets of sovereignty. Better would it be for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapon in hand, should in battle slay me (myself) unavenging unarmed.—”

Sanjaya continued,—“Having spoken thus on the field of battle, Arjuna, his mind troubled with grief, casting aside his bow and arrows, sat down on his car.”

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THE WAY OF DISCERNMENT

Sanjaya said,—“Unto him thus possessed with pity, his eyes filled and oppressed with tears, and desponding, the slayer of Madhu said these words.”

“The Holy One said,—‘Whence, O Arjuna, hath come upon thee, at such a crisis, this despondency that is unbecoming a person of noble birth, that shuts one out from heaven, and that is productive of infamy? Let no effeminacy be thine, O son of Kunti. This suits thee not. Shaking off this vile weakness of hearts, arise, O chastiser of foes.—’

“Arjuna said,—‘How, O slayer of Madhu, can I with arrows contend in battle against Bhishma and Drona, deserving as they are, O slayer of foes, of worship? Without slaying (one’s) preceptors of great glory, it is well (for one), to live on even alms in this world. By slaying preceptors, even if they are avaricious of wealth, I should only enjoy pleasures that are bloodstained! We know not which of the two is of greater moment to us, viz., whether we should conquer them or they should conquer us. By slaying whom we would not like to live,—even they, the sons of Dhritarashtra, stand before (us). My nature affected by the taint of compassion, my mind unsettled about (my) duty, I ask thee. Tell me what is assuredly good (for me). I am thy disciple. O, instruct me, I seek thy aid. I do not see (that)

which would dispel that grief of mine blasting my very senses, even if I obtain a prosperous kingdom on earth without a foe or the very sovereignty of the gods.”

Sanjaya said,—“Having said this unto Hrishikesa, that chastiser of foes—Gudakesa—(once more) addressed Govinda, saying,—‘I will not fight,’—and then remained silent. Unto him overcome by despondency, Hrishikesa, in the midst of the two armies, said:”

“The Holy One said,—‘Thou mournest those that deserve not to be mourned. Thou speakest also the words of the (so-called) wise. Those, however, that are (really) wise, grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. It is not that. I or you or those rulers of men never were, or that all of us shall not hereafter be. Of an Embodied being, as childhood, youth, and decrepitude are in this body, so (also) is the acquisition of another body. The man, who is wise, is never deluded in this. The contacts of the senses with their (respective) objects producing (sensations of) heat and cold, pleasure and pain, are not permanent, having (as they do) a beginning and an end. Do thou, O Bharata, endure them. For the man whom these afflict not, O bull among men, who is the same in pain and pleasure and who is firm in mind, is fit for emancipation. There is no (objective) existence of anything that is distinct from the soul; nor non-existence of anything possessing the virtues of the soul. This conclusion in respect of both these hath been arrived at by those that know the truths (of things). Know that [the soul] to be immortal by which all this [universe] is pervaded. No one can compass the destruction of that which is imperishable. It hath been said that those bodies of the Embodied (soul) which is eternal, indestructible and infinite, have an end. Do thou, therefore, fight, O Bharata. He who thinks it (the soul) to be the slayer and he who thinks it to be the slain, both of them know nothing; for it

neither slays nor is slain. It is never born, nor doth it ever die; nor, having existed, will it exist no more. Unborn, unchangeable, eternal, and ancient, it is not slain upon the body being perished. That man who knoweth it to be indestructible, unchangeable, without decay, how and whom can he slay or cause to be slain? As a man, casting off robes that are worn out, putteth on others that are new, so the Embodied (soul), casting off bodies that are worn out, entereth other bodies that are new. Weapons cleave it not, fire consumeth it not; the waters do not drench it, nor doth the wind waste it. It is incapable of being cut, burnt, drenched, or dried up. It is unchangeable, all-pervading, stable, firm, and eternal. It is said to be imperceivable, inconceivable and unchangeable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, it behoveth thee not to mourn (for it). Then again even if thou regardest it as constantly born and constantly dead, it behoveth thee not yet, O mighty-armed one, to mourn (for it) thus. For, of one that is born, death is certain; and of one that is dead, birth is certain. Therefore it behoveth thee not to mourn in a matter that is unavoidable. All beings (before birth) were unmanifest. Only during an interval (between birth and death), O Bharata, are they manifest; and then again, when death comes, they become (once more) unmanifest. What grief then is there in this? One looks upon it as a marvel; another speaks of it as a marvel. Yet even after having heard of it, no one apprehends it truly. The Embodied (soul), O Bharata, is ever indestructible in everyone's body. Therefore, it behoveth thee not to grieve for all (those) creatures. Casting thy eyes on the (prescribed) duties of thy order, it behoveth thee not to waver, for there is nothing else that is better for a Kshatriya than a battle fought fairly. Arrived of itself and (like unto) an open gate of heaven, happy are those Kshatriyas, O Partha, that obtain such a fight. But if thou dost not fight such a just battle, thou shalt then incur sin by abandoning the duties of thy order and thy fame. People

will then proclaim thy eternal infamy, and to one that is held in respect, infamy is greater (as an evil) than death itself. All great car-warriors will regard thee as abstaining from battle from fear, and thou wilt be thought lightly by those that had (hitherto) esteemed thee highly. Thy enemies, decrying thy prowess, will say many words which should not be said. What can be more painful than that? Slain, thou wilt attain to heaven; or victorious, thou wilt enjoy the Earth. Therefore, arise, O son of Kunti, resolved for battle. Regarding pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, as equal, do battle for battle's sake and sin will not be thine. This knowledge, that hath been communicated to thee is (taught) in the Sankhya (system). Listen now to that (inculcated) in Yoga (system). Possessed of that knowledge, thou, O Partha, wilt cast off the bonds of action. In this (the Yoga system) there is no waste of even the first attempt. There are no impediments. Even a little of this (form of) piety delivers from great fear. Here in this path, O son of Kuru, there is only one state of mind, consisting in firm devotion (to one object, viz., securing emancipation). The minds of those, however, that are not firmly devoted (to this), are many-branched (un-settled) and attached to endless pursuits. That flowery talk which, they that are ignorant, they that delight in the words of the Vedas, they, O Partha, that say that there is nothing else, they whose minds are attached to worldly pleasures, they that regard (a) heaven (of pleasures and enjoyments) as the highest object of acquisition,—utter and promises birth as the fruit of action and concerns itself with multifarious rites of specific characters for the attainment of pleasures and power,—delude their hearts and the minds of these men who are attached to pleasures and power cannot be directed to contemplation (of the divine being) regarding it as the sole means of emancipation. The Vedas are concerned with three qualities, (viz., religion, profit, and pleasure). Be thou, O Arjuna, free from them, unaffected by

pairs of contraries (such as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc.), ever adhering to patience without anxiety for new acquisitions or protection of those already acquired, and self-possessed, whatever objects are served by a tank or well, may all be served by a vast sheet of water extending all around; so whatever objects may be served by all the Vedas, may all be had by a Brahmana having knowledge (of self or Brahma). Thy concern is with work only, but not with the fruit (of work). Let not the fruit be thy motive for work; nor let thy inclination be for inaction. Staying in devotion, apply thyself to work, casting off attachment (to it), O Dhananjaya, and being the same in success or unsuccess. This equanimity is called Yoga (devotion). Work (with desire of fruit) is far inferior to devotion, O Dhananjaya. Seek thou the protection of devotion. They that work for the sake of fruit are miserable. He also that hath devotion throws off, even in this world, both good actions and bad actions. Therefore, apply thyself to devotion. Devotion is only cleverness in action. The wise, possessed of devotion, cast off the fruit born of action, and freed from the obligation of (repeated) birth, attain to that region where there is no unhappiness. When thy mind shall have crossed the maze of delusion, then shalt thou attain to an indifference as regards the hearable and the heard. When thy mind, distracted (now) by what thou hast heard (about the means of acquiring the diverse objects of life), will be firmly and immovably fixed on contemplation, then wilt thou attain to devotion.'

"Arjuna said,—'What, O Kesava, are the indications of one whose mind is fixed on contemplation? How should one of steady mind speak, how sit, how move?'"

"The Holy One said,—'When one casts off all the desires of his heart and is pleased within (his) self with self, then is one said to be of steady mind. He whose mind is not

agitated amid calamities, whose craving for pleasure is gone, who is freed from attachment (to worldly objects), fear and wrath, is said to be a Muni of steady mind. His is steadiness of mind who is without affection everywhere, and who feelth no exultation and no aversion on obtaining diverse objects that are agreeable and disagreeable. When one withdraws his senses from the objects of (those) senses as the tortoise its limbs from all sides, even his is steadiness of mind. Objects of senses fall back from an abstinent person, but not so the passion (for those objects). Even the passion recedes from one who has beheld the Supreme (being). The agitating senses, O son of Kunti, forcibly draw away the mind of even a wise man striving hard to keep himself aloof from them. Restraining them all, one should stay in contemplation, making me his sole refuge. For his is steadiness of mind whose senses are under control. Thinking of the objects of sense, a person's attachment is begotten towards them. From attachment springeth wrath; from wrath ariseth want of discrimination; from want of discrimination, loss of memory; from loss of memory, loss of understanding; and from loss of understanding (he) is utterly ruined. But the self-restrained man, enjoying objects (of sense) with senses freed from attachment and aversion under his own control, attaineth to peace (of mind). On peace (of mind) being attained, the annihilation of all his miseries taketh place, since the mind of him whose heart is peaceful soon becometh steady. He who is not self-restrained hath no contemplation (of self). He who hath no contemplation hath no peace (of mind). Whence can there be happiness for him who hath no peace (of mind)? For the heart that follows in the wake of the sense moving (among their objects) destroys his understanding like the wind destroying a boat in the waters. Therefore, O thou of mighty arms, his is steadiness of mind whose senses are restrained on all sides from the objects of sense. The restrained man is awake when it is night for all

creatures; and when other creatures are awake that is night to a discerning Muni. He into whom all objects of desire enter, even as the waters enter the ocean which (though) constantly replenished still maintains its water-mark unchanged—(he) obtains peace (of mind) and not one that longeth for objects of desire. That man who moveth about, giving up all objects of desire, who is free from craving (for enjoyments) and who hath no affection and no pride, attaineth to peace (of mind). This, O Partha, is the divine state. Attaining to it, one is never deluded. Abiding in it one obtains, on death, absorption into the Supreme Self.”

THE WAY OF ACTION

“Arjuna said,—‘If devotion, O Janardana, is regarded by thee as superior to work, why then, O Kesava, dost thou engage me in such dreadful work? By equivocal words thou seemest to confound my understanding. Therefore, tell (me) one thing definitely by which I may attain to what is good.’

“The Holy One said,—‘It hath already been said by me, O sinless one, that here are, in this world, two kinds of devotion; that of the Sankhyas through knowledge and that of the yogins through work. A man doth not acquire freedom from work from (only) the non-performance of work. Nor doth he acquire final emancipation from only renunciation (of work). No one can abide even for a moment without doing work. That man of deluded soul who, curbing the organs of sense, liveth mentally cherishing the objects of sense, is said to be a dissembler. He however, O Arjuna, who restraining (his) senses by his mind, engageth in devotion (in the form) of work with the organs of work, and is free from attachment, is distinguished (above all). (Therefore), do thou always apply yourself to work, for action is better than inaction. Even the support of thy body cannot be accomplished without work. This world is fettered by all work other than that which is (performed) for Sacrifice. (Therefore), O son of

Kunti, perform work for the sake of that, freed from attachment. In olden times, the Lord of Creation, creating men and sacrifice together, said,—flourish by means of this (Sacrifice). Let this (Sacrifice) be to you (all) the dispenser of all objects cherished by you. Rear the gods with this, and let the gods (in return) rear you. Thus fulfilling the mutual interest you will obtain that which is beneficial (to you). Propitiated with sacrifices the gods will bestow on you the pleasures you desire. He who enjoyeth (himself) without giving them what they have given, is assuredly a thief. The good who eat the remnant of sacrifices are freed from all sins. Those unrighteous ones incur sin who dress food for their own sake.—From food are all creatures; and sacrifice is the outcome of work. Know that work proceeds from the Vedas; Vedas have proceeded from Him who hath no decay. Therefore, the all-pervading Supreme Being is installed in sacrifice. He who conformeth not to this wheel that is thus revolving, that man of sinful life delighting (the indulgence of) his senses, liveth in vain, O Partha. The man, however, that is attached to self only, that is contented with self, and that is pleased in his self,—hath no work (to do). He hath no concern whatever with action nor with any omission here. Nor, amongst all creatures, is there any upon whom his interest dependeth. Therefore, always do work that should be done, without attachment. The man who performeth work without attachment, attaineth to the Supreme. By work alone, Janaka and others, attained the accomplishment of their objects. Having regard also to the observance by men of their duties, it behoveth thee to work. Whatever a great man doth, is also done by vulgar people. Ordinary men follow the ideal set by them (the great). There is nothing whatever for me, O Partha, to do in the three worlds, (since I have) nothing for me which hath not been acquired; still I engage in action. Because if at any time I do not, without sloth, engage in action, men would follow my path, O Partha, on all sides. The worlds would

perish if I did not perform work, and I should cause intermixture of castes and ruin these people. As the ignorant work, O Bharata, having attachment to the performer, so should a wise man work without being attached, desiring to make men observant of their duties. A wise man should not cause confusion of understanding amongst ignorant persons, who have attachment to work itself; (on the other hand) he should (himself) acting with devotion engage them to all (kinds of) work. All works are, in every way, done by the qualities of nature. He, whose mind is deluded by egoism, however, regards himself as the actor. But he, O mighty-armed one, who knoweth the distinction (of self) from qualities and work, is not attached to work, considering that it is his senses alone (and not his self) that engage in their objects. Those who are deluded by the qualities of nature, become attached to the works done by the qualities. A person of perfect knowledge should not bewilder those men of imperfect knowledge. Devoting all work to me, with (thy) mind directed to self, engage in battle, without desire, without affection and with thy (heart's) weakness dispelled. Those men who always follow this opinion of mine with faith and without cavil attain to final emancipation even by work. But they who cavil at and do not follow this opinion of mine, know, that, bereft of all knowledge and without discrimination, they are ruined. Even a wise man acts according to his own nature. All living beings follow (their own) nature. What then would restraint avail? The senses have, as regards the objects of the senses, either affection or aversion fixed. One should not submit to these, for they are obstacles in one's way. One's own duty, even if imperfectly performed, is better than being done by other even if well performed. Death in (performance of) one's own duty is preferable. (The adoption of) the duty of another carries fear (with it).'

“Arjuna said, ‘Impelled by whom, O son of the Vrishni race, doth a man commit sin, even though unwilling and as if constrained by force?’

“The Holy One said,—‘It is desire, it is wrath, born of the attribute of passion; it is all devouring, it is very sinful. Know this to be the foe in this world. As fire is enveloped by smoke, a mirror by dust, the foetus by the womb, so is this enveloped by desire. Knowledge, O son of Kunti, is enveloped by this constant foe of the wise in the form of desire which is insatiable and like a fire. The senses, the mind and the understanding are said to be its abode. With these it deludeth the embodied self, enveloping (his) knowledge. Therefore, restraining (thy) senses first, O bull of Bharata’s race, cast off this wicked thing, for it destroyeth knowledge derived from instruction and meditation. It hath been said that the senses are superior (to the body which is inert). Superior to the senses is the mind. Superior to the mind is the knowledge. But which is superior to knowledge is He. Thus knowing that which is superior to knowledge and restraining (thy) self by self, slay, O mighty-armed one, the enemy in the shape of desire which is difficult to conquer.’”

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THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE

“The Holy One said,—‘This imperishable (system of) devotion I declared to Vivaswat; Vivaswat declared it to Manu; and Manu communicated it to Ikshaku. Descending thus from generation, the Royal sages came to know it. But, O chastiser of foes, by (lapse of a) long time that devotion became lost to the world. Even the same (system of) devotion hath today been declared by me to thee, for thou art my devotee and friend, (and) this is a great mystery.’

“Arjuna said,—‘Thy birth is posterior; Vivaswat’s birth is prior. How shall I understand then that thou hadst first declared (it)?’

“The Holy One said,—‘Many births of mine have passed away, O Arjuna, as also of thine. These all I know, but thou dost not, O chastiser of foes. Though (I am) unborn and of essence that knoweth no deterioration, though (I am) the lord of all creatures, still, relying on my own (material) nature I take birth by my own (powers) of illusion. Whenever, O Bharata, loss of piety and the rise of impiety occurreth, on those occasions do I create myself. For the protection of the righteous and for the destruction of the evil doers, for the sake of establishing Piety, I am born age after age. He who truly knoweth my divine birth and work to be such, casting off (his body) is not born again; (on the other hand) he cometh to me, O Arjuna. Many who have

been freed from attachment, fear, wrath, who were full of me, and who relied on me, have, cleansed by knowledge and asceticism, attained to my essence. In whatsoever manner men come to me, in the selfsame manner do I accept them. It is my way, O Partha, that men follow on all sides. Those in this world who are desirous of the success of action worship the gods, for in this world of men success resulting from action is soon attained. The quadruple division of castes was created by me according to the distinction of qualities and duties. Though I am the author thereof, (yet) know me to be not their author and undecaying. Actions do not touch me. I have no longing for the fruits of actions. He that knoweth me thus is not impeded by actions. Knowing this, even men of old who were desirous of emancipation performed work. Therefore, do thou also perform work as was done by ancients of the remote past. What is action and what is inaction,—even the learned are perplexed at this. Therefore, I will tell thee about action (so that) knowing it thou mayst be freed from evil. One should have knowledge of action, and one should have knowledge of forbidden actions: one should also know of inaction. The course of action is incomprehensible. He, who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, is wise among men; he is possessed of devotion; and he is a doer of all actions. The learned call him wise whose efforts are all free from desire (of fruit) and (consequent) will, and whose actions have all been consumed by the fire of knowledge. Whoever, resigning all attachment to the fruit of action, is ever contented and is dependent on none, doth nought, indeed, although engaged in action. He who, without desire, with mind and the senses under control, and casting off all concerns, performeth action only for the preservation of the body, incurreth no sin. He who is contented with what is earned without exertion, who hath risen superior to the pairs of opposites, who is without jealousy, who is equable in success and failure, is not

fettered (by action) even though he works. All his actions perish who acts for the sake of sacrifice, who is without affections, who is free (from attachments), and whose mind is fixed upon knowledge. Brahma is the vessel (with which the libation is poured); Brahma is the libation (that is offered); Brahma is the fire on which by Brahma is poured (the libation); Brahma is the goal to which he proceedeth by fixing his mind on Brahma itself which is the action. Some devotees perform sacrifice to the gods. Others, by means of sacrifice, offer up sacrifices to the fire of Brahma. Others offer up (as sacrificial libation) the senses of which hearing is the first to the fire of restraint. Others (again) offer up (as libations) the objects of sense of which sound is the first to the fire of the senses. Others (again) offer up all the functions of the senses and the functions of the vital winds to the fire of devotion by self-restraint kindled by knowledge. Others again perform the sacrifice of wealth, the sacrifice of ascetic austerities, the sacrifice of meditation, the sacrifice of (Vedic) study, the sacrifice of knowledge, and others are ascetics of rigid vows. Some offer up the upward vital wind (Prana) to the downward vital wind (apana); and others, the downward vital wind to the upward vital wind; some, arresting the course of (both) the upward and the downward vital winds, are devoted to the restraint of the vital winds. Others of restricted rations, offer the vital winds to the vital winds. Even all these who are conversant with sacrifice, whose sins have been consumed by sacrifice, and who eat the remnants of sacrifice which are amrita, attain to the eternal Brahma. (Even) this world is not for him who doth not perform sacrifice. Whence then the other, O best of Kuru's race? Thus diverse are the sacrifices occurring in the Vedas. Know that all of them result from action, and knowing this thou wilt be emancipated. The sacrifice of knowledge, O chastiser of foes, is superior to every sacrifice involving (the attainment of) fruits of action, for all action, O Partha,

is wholly comprehended in knowledge. Learn that (Knowledge) by prostration, enquiry, and service. They who are possessed of knowledge and can see the truth, will teach thee that knowledge, knowing which, O son of Pandu, thou wilt not again come by such delusion, and by which thou wilt see the endless creatures (of the universe) in thyself (first) and then in me. Even if thou be the greatest sinner among all that are sinful, thou shalt yet cross over all transgressions by the raft of knowledge. As a blazing fire, O Arjuna, reduceth fuel to ashes, so doth the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. For there is nothing here that is so cleansing as knowledge. One who hath attained to success by devotion finds it without effort within his own self in time. He obtaineth knowledge, who hath faith and is intent on it and who hath his senses under control; obtaining knowledge one findeth the highest tranquillity in no length of time. One who hath no knowledge and no faith, and whose mind is full of doubt, is lost. Neither this world, nor the next, nor happiness, is for him whose mind is full of doubt. Actions do not fetter him, O Dhananjaya, who hath cast off action by devotion, whose doubts have been dispelled by knowledge, and who is self-restrained. Therefore, destroying, by the sword of knowledge, this doubt of thine that is born of ignorance and that dwelleth in thy mind, betake to devotion, (and) arise, O son of Bharata.”

THE WAY OF RENUNCIATION

“Arjuna said,—‘Thou applaudest, O Krishna, the abandonment of actions, and again the application (to them). Tell me definitely which one of these two is superior.’

“The Holy One said—‘Both abandonment of actions and application to actions lead to emancipation. But of these, application to action is superior to abandonment. He should always be known to be an ascetic who hath no aversion nor desire. For, being free from pairs of opposites, O thou of mighty arms, he is easily released from the bonds (of action). Fools say, but not those that are wise, that Sankhya and Yoga are distinct. One who stayeth in even one (of the two) reapeth the fruit of both. Whatever seat is attained by those who profess the Sankhya system, that too is reached by those who profess the Yoga. He seeth truly who seeth Sankhya and Yoga as one. But renunciation, O mighty-armed one, without devotion (to action), is difficult to attain. The ascetic who is engaged in devotion (by action) reacheth the Supreme Being without delay. He who is engaged in devotion (by action) and is of pure soul, who hath conquered his body and subdued his senses, and who indentifieth himself with all creatures, is not fettered though performing (action). The man of devotion, who knoweth truth, thinking—I am doing nothing—When

seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, talking, excreting, taking, opening the eyelids or closing them; he regardeth that it is the senses that are engaged in the objects of senses. He who renouncing attachment engageth in actions, resigning them to Brahma, is not touched by sin as the lotus-leaf (is not touched) by water. Those who are devotees, casting off attachment, perform actions (attaining) purity of self, with the body, the mind, the understanding, and even the senses (free from desire). He who is possessed of devotion, renouncing the fruit of action, attaineth to the highest tranquillity. He, who is not possessed of devotion and is attached to the fruit of action, is fettered by action performed from desire. The self-restrained embodied (self), renouncing all actions by the mind, remains at ease within the house of nine gates, neither acting himself nor causing (anything) to act. The Lord is not the cause of the capacity for action, or of the actions of men, or of the connection of actions and (their) fruit. It is nature that engages (in action). The Lord receiveth no one's sin, nor also merit. By ignorance, knowledge is shrouded. It is for this that creatures are deluded. But of whomsoever that ignorance hath been destroyed by knowledge of self, that knowledge (which is) like the Sun discloseth the Supreme Being. Those whose mind is on Him, whose very soul is He, who abide in Him, and who have Him for their goal, depart never more to return, their sins being all destroyed by knowledge. Those, who are wise cast an equal eye on a Brahmana endued with learning and modesty, on a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a chandala. Even here has birth been conquered by them whose minds rest on equality; and since Brahma is faultless and equable, therefore, they (are said to) abide in Brahma. He whose mind is steady, who is not deluded, who knows Brahma, and who rests in Brahma, doth not exult on obtaining anything that is agreeable, nor doth he grieve on obtaining that is disagreeable. He whose mind is not

attached to external objects of sense, obtaineth that happiness which is in self; and by concentrating his mind on the contemplation of Brahma, he enjoyeth a happiness that is imperishable. The enjoyments born of the contact (of the senses with their objects) are productive of sorrow. He who is wise, O son of Kunti, never taketh pleasure in these that have a beginning and an end. That man whoever here, before the dissolution of the body, is able to endure the agitations resulting from desire and wrath, is fixed on contemplation, and is happy. He who findeth happiness within himself, (and) who sporteth within himself, he whose light (of knowledge) is deprived from within himself, is a devotee, and becoming one with Brahma attaineth to absorption into Brahma. Those saintly personages whose sins have been destroyed, whose doubts have been dispelled, who are self-restrained, and who are engaged in the good of all creatures, obtain absorption into Brahma. For these devotees who are freed from desire and wrath, whose minds are under control, and who have knowledge of self, absorption into Brahma exists both here and thereafter. Excluding (from his mind) all external objects of sense, directing the visual glance between the brows, mingling (into one) the upward and the downward life-breaths and making them pass through the nostrils, the devotee, who has restrained the senses, the mind, and the understanding, being intent on emancipation, and who is freed from desire, fear, and wrath, is emancipated, indeed. Knowing me to be enjoyer of all sacrifices and ascetic austerities, the great Lord of all the worlds, and friend of all creatures, such a one obtaineth tranquillity.”

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THE WAY OF MEDITATION

“**T**he Holy One said,—‘Regardless of fruit of action, he that performs the actions which should be performed, is a renouncer and devotee, and not one who discards the (sacrificial) fire, nor one that abstains from action. That which has been called renunciation, know that, O son of Pandu, to be devotion, since nobody can be a devotee who has not renounced (all) resolves. To the sage desirous of rising to devotion, action is said to be the means; and when he has risen to devotion, cessation of action is said to be the means. When one is no longer attached to the objects of the senses, nor to actions, and when one renounces all resolves, then is one said to have risen to devotion. One should raise (his) self by self; one should not degrade (his) self; for one’s own self is one’s friend, and one’s own self is one’s enemy. To him (only) who has subjugated his self by his self is self a friend. But to him who has not subjugated his self, his self behaves inimically like an enemy. The soul of one who has subjugated his self and who is in the enjoyment of tranquillity, is steadily fixed (on itself) amid cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and also honour and dishonour. That ascetic is said to be devoted whose mind is satisfied with knowledge and experience, who hath no affection, who hath subjugated his senses, and to whom a sod, a stone and gold are alike. He, who views equally well-wishers, friends, foes, strangers that are indifferent to him,

those who take part with both sides, those who are objects of aversion, those who are related (to him), those who are good, and those who are wicked, is distinguished (above all others). A devotee should always fix his mind on contemplation, remaining in a secluded place alone, restraining both mind and body, without expectations (of any kind), and without concern (with anything). Erecting his seat immovably on a clean spot, not too high nor too low, and spreading over it a piece of cloth, a deer-skin, or blades of Kusa grass, and there seated on that seat, with mind fixed on one object, and restraining the functions of the heart and the senses, one should practise contemplation for the purification of self. Holding body, head, and neck even, unmoved and steady, and casting his glance on the tip of his nose, and without looking about in any of the different directions, with mind in tranquillity, freed from fear, observant of the practices of Brahmacharins, restraining the mind, with heart fixed on me, the devotee should sit down, regarding me as the object of his attainment. Thus applying his soul constantly, the devotee whose heart is restrained, attains to that tranquillity which culminates in final absorption and assimilation with me. Devotion is not one's, O Arjuna, who eateth much, nor one's who doth not eat at all; nor one's who is addicted to too much sleep, nor one's who is always awake, devotion that is destructive of misery is his who is temperate in food and amusements, who duly exerts himself temperately in all his works, and who is temperate in sleep and vigils. When one's heart, properly restrained, is fixed on one's own self, then, indifferent to all objects of desire, he is one called a devotee. As a lamp in a windless spot doth not flicker, even that is the resemblance declared of a devotee whose heart hath been restrained and who applieth his self to abstraction. That (condition) in which the mind, restrained by practice of abstraction, taketh rest, in which beholding self by self, one is gratified within self;

in which one experienceth that highest felicity which is beyond the (sphere of the) senses and which the understanding (only) can grasp, and fixed on which one never swerveth from the truth; acquiring which one regards no other acquisition greater than it, and abiding in which one is never moved by even the heaviest sorrow; that (Condition) should be known to be what is called devotion in which there is a severance of connection with pain. That devotion should be practised with perseverance and with an undesponding heart. Renouncing all desires without exception that are born of resolves, restraining the group of the senses on all sides by mind alone, one should, by slow degrees, become quiescent (aided) by (his) understanding controlled by patience, and then directing his mind to self should think of nothing. Wheresoever the mind, which is (by nature) restless and unsteady, may run, restraining it from those, one should direct it to self alone. Indeed, unto such a devotee whose mind is in tranquillity, whose passions have been suppressed, who hath become one with Brahma and who is free from sin, the highest felicity cometh (of his own accord). Thus applying his soul constantly (to abstraction), the devotee, freed from sin, easily obtaineth that highest happiness, viz., with Brahma. He who hath devoted his self to abstraction casting an equal eye everywhere, beholdeth his self in all creatures and all creatures in his self. Unto him who beholdeth me in everything and beholdeth everything in me, I am never lost and he also is never lost to me. He who worshipping me as abiding in all creatures, holding yet that all is one, is a devotee, and whatever mode of life he may lead, he liveth in me. That devotee, O Arjuna, who casteth an equal eye everywhere, regarding all things as his own self and the happiness and misery of others as his own, is deemed to be the best.'

“Arjuna said, ‘This devotion by means of equanimity which thou hast declared, O slayer of Madhu,—on account of restlessness of the mind I do not see its stable presence. O Krishna, the mind is restless, boisterous, perverse, and obstinate. Its restraint I regard to be as difficult of accomplishment as the restraint of the wind.’

“The Holy One said, ‘Without doubt, O thou of mighty arms the mind is difficult of subjugation and is restless. With practice, however, O son of Kunti, and with the abandonment of desire, it can be controlled. It is my belief that by him whose mind is not restrained, devotion is difficult of acquisition. But by one whose mind is restrained and who is assiduous, it is capable of acquisition with the aid of means.’

“Arjuna said, ‘Without assiduity, though endued with faith, and with mind shaken off from devotion, what is the end of him, O Krishna, who hath not earned success in devotion? Fallen off from both, is he lost like a separated cloud or not, being as he is without refuge, O thou of mighty arms, and deluded on the path leading to Brahma? This my doubt, O Krishna, it behoveth thee to remove without leaving anything. Besides thee, no dispeller of this doubt is to be had.’

“The Holy One said, ‘O son of Pritha, neither here, nor hereafter, doth ruin exist for him, since none, O sire, who performs good (acts) comes by an evil end. Attaining to the regions reserved for those that perform meritorious acts and living there for many many years, he that hath fallen off from devotion taketh birth in the abode of those that art pious and endued with prosperity, or, he is born even in the family of devotees endued with intelligence. Indeed, a birth such as this is more difficult of acquisition in this world. There in those births he obtaineth contact with that

Brahmic knowledge which was his in his former life; and from that point he striveth again, O descendant of Kuru, towards perfection. And although unwilling, he still worketh on in consequence of that same former practice of his. Even one that enquireth of devotion riseth above (the fruits of) the Divine Word. Striving with great efforts, the devotee, cleaned of all his sins, attaineth to perfection after many births, and then reacheth the supreme goal. The devotee is superior to ascetics engaged in austerities; he is esteemed to be superior to even the man of knowledge. The devotee is superior to those that are engaged in action. Therefore, become a devotee, O Arjuna. Even amongst all the devotees, he who, full of faith and with inner self resting on me, worshippeth me, is regarded by me to be the most devout.”

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THE KNOWLEDGE AND DISCERNMENT

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘Listen, O son of Pritha, how, without doubt, thou mayst know me fully, fixing thy mind on me, practising devotion, and taking refuge in me. I will now, without leaving anything out speak to thee about knowledge and experience, knowing which there would be left nothing in this world (for thee) to know. One among thousands of men striveth for perfection. Of those even that are assiduous and have attained to perfection, only some one knoweth me truly. Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, also understanding, and consciousness,—thus hath my nature been divided eight-fold. This is a lower (form of my) nature. Different from this, know there is a higher (form of my) nature which is animate, O thou of mighty arms, and by which this universe is held. Know that all creatures have these for their source. I am the source of evolution and also of the dissolution of the entire universe. There is nothing else, O Dhananjaya, that is higher than myself. Upon me is all this like a row of pearls on a string. Taste I am in the waters, O son of Kunti, (and) I am the splendour of both the moon and the sun, I am the Om in all the Vedas, the sound in space, and the manliness in men. I am the fragrant odour in earth, the splendour in fire, the life in all (living) creatures, and penance in ascetics. Know me, O son of Pritha, to be the eternal seed of all beings. I am the intelligence of all creatures endued with intelligence,

the glory of all glorious objects. I am also the strength of all that are endued with strength, (myself) freed from desire and thirst, and, O bull of Bharata's race, am the desire, consistent with duty, in all creatures. And all existences which are of the quality of goodness, and which are of the quality of passion and quality of darkness, know that they are, indeed, from me. I am, however, not in them, but they are in me. This entire universe, deluded by these three entities consisting of (these) three qualities knoweth not me that am beyond them and undecaying; since this illusion of mine, depending on the (three) qualities, is exceedingly marvellous and highly difficult of being transcended. They that resort to me alone cross this illusion. Doers of evil, ignorant men, the worst of their species, robbed of their knowledge by (my) illusion and wedded to the state of demons, do not resort to me. Four classes of doers of good deeds worship me, O Arjuna, viz., he that is distressed, that is possessed of knowledge, being always devoted and having his faith in only One, is superior to the rest, for unto the man of knowledge I am dear above everything, and he also is dear to me. All these are noble. But the man of knowledge is regarded (by me) to be my very self, since he, with soul fixed on abstraction, taketh refuge in me as the highest goal. At the end of many births, the man possessed of knowledge attaineth to me, (thinking) that Vasudeva is all this. Such a high-souled person, however, is exceedingly rare. They who have been robbed of knowledge by desire, resort to their godheads, observant of diverse regulations and controlled by their own nature. Whatever form, (of godhead or myself) any worshipper desireth to worship with faith, that faith of his unto that (form) I render steady. Endued with that faith, he payeth his adorations to that (form), and obtaineth from that all his desire, since all those are ordained by me. The fruits, however, of those persons endued with little intelligence are perishable. They that worship the

divinities, go to the divinities, (while) they that worship me come even to me. They that have no discernment, regard me who am (really) unmanifest to have become manifest, because they do not know the transcendent and undecaying state of mine than which there is nothing higher. Shrouded by the illusion of my inconceivable power, I am not manifest to all. This deluded world knoweth not me that I am unborn and undecaying. I know, O Arjuna, all things that have been past, and all things that are present, and all things that are to be. But there is nobody that knoweth me. All creatures, O chastiser of foes, are deluded at the time of their birth by the delusion, O Bharata, of pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion. But those persons of meritorious deeds whose sins have attained their end, being freed from the delusion of pairs of opposites, worship me, firm in their vow (of that worship). Those who, taking refuge in me, strive for release from decay and death, know Brahman, the entire Adhyatma, and action. And they who know me with the Adhibhuta, the Adhidaiva, and the Adhiyajna, having minds fixed on abstraction, know me at the time of their departure (from this world).”

THE IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN

“Arjuna said, ‘What is that Brahman, what is Adhyatma, what is action, O best of male beings? What also has been said to be Adhibhuta, and what is called Adhidaiva? Who is here Adhiyajna, and how, in this body, O slayer of Madhu? And how at the time of departure art thou to be known by those that have restrained their self’?—

“The Holy One said, ‘Brahman is the Supreme and indestructible. Adhyatma is said to be its own manifestation. The offering (to any godhead in a sacrifice) which causeth the production and development of all—this is called action. Remembering me alone in (his) last moments, he that, casting off his body, departeth (hence), cometh into my essence. There is no doubt in this. Whichever form (of godhead) one remembereth when one casteth off, at the end, (his) body, unto that one he goeth, O son of Kunti, having habitually meditated on it always. Therefore, think of me at all times, and engage in battle. Fixing thy mind and understanding on me, thou wilt, without doubt, come even to me. Thinking (of the Supreme) with a mind not running to other objects and endued with abstraction in the form of uninterrupted application, one goeth, O son of Pritha, unto the Divine and Supreme male Being. He who at the time of his departure, with a steady mind, endued with reverence, with power of

abstraction, and directing the life-breath called Prana between the eye-brows, thinketh of that ancient seer, who is the ruler (of all), who is minuter than the minutest atom, who is the ordainer of all, who is inconceivable in form, and who is beyond all darkness, cometh unto that Divine and Supreme Male Being. I will tell thee in brief about that seat which persons conversant with the Vedas declare to be indestructible, which is entered by ascetics freed from all longings, and in expectation of which (people) practise the vows of Brahmacharins. Casting off (this) body, he who departeth, stopping up all the doors, confining the mind within the heart, placing his own life-breath called Prana between the eye-brows, resting on continued meditation, uttering this one syllable Om which is Brahman, and thinking of me, attaineth to the highest goal. He who always thinketh of me with mind ever withdrawn from all other objects, unto that devotee always engaged on meditation, I am, O Partha, easy of access. High-souled persons who have achieved the highest perfection, attaining to me, do not incur re-birth which is the abode of sorrow and which is transient. All the worlds, O Arjuna, from the abode of Brahman downwards have to go through a round of births; on attaining to me, however, O son of Kunti, there is no re-birth. They who know a day of Brahman to end after a thousand Yugas, and a night (of his) to terminate after a thousand Yugas are persons that know day and night. On the advent of (Brahman's) day everything that is manifest springeth from the unmanifest; and when (his) night cometh, into that same which is called unmanifest all things disappear. That same assemblage of creatures, springing forth again and again, dissolveth on the advent of night, and springeth forth (again), O son of Pritha, when day cometh, constrained (by the force of action, etc.). There is, however, another entity, unmanifest and eternal, which is beyond that unmanifest, and which is not destroyed when all the entities are destroyed. It is said

to be unmanifest and indestructible. They call it the highest goal, attaining which no one hath to come back. That is my Supreme seat. That Supreme Being, O son of Pritha, He within whom are all entities, and by whom all this is permeated, is to be attained by reverence undirected to any other object. I will tell thee the times, O bull of Bharata's race, in which devotees departing (from this life) go, never to return, or to return. The fire, the Light, the day, the lighted fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice, departing from here, the persons knowing Brahma go through this path to Brahma. Smoke, night, also the dark-fortnight (and) the six months of the southern solstice, (departing) through this path, devotee, attaining to the lunar light, returneth. The bright and the dark, these two paths, are regarded to be the eternal (two paths) of the universe. By the one, (one) goeth never to return; by the other, one (going) cometh back. Knowing these two paths, O son of Pritha, no devotee is deluded. Therefore, at all times, be endued with devotion, O Arjuna. The meritorious fruit that is prescribed for the (study of the) Vedas, for sacrifices, for ascetic austerities and for gifts, a devotee knowing all this (that hath been said here), attaineth to it all, and (also) attaineth the Supreme and Primeval seat.”

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THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘Now I will tell thee that art without envy that most mysterious knowledge along with experience, knowing which thou wilt be freed from evil. This is royal science, a royal mystery, highly cleansing, directly apprehensible, consistent with the sacred laws, easy to practise, (and) imperishable. Those persons, O chastiser of foes, who have no faith in this sacred doctrine, not attaining to me, return to the path of this world that is subject to destruction. This entire universe is pervaded by me in my unmanifest form. All entities are in me, but I do not reside in them. Nor yet are all entities in me. Behold my divine power. Supporting all entities and producing all entities, myself doth not (yet) reside in (those) entities. As the great and obiquitious atmosphere always occupieth space, understand that all entities reside in me in the same way. All entities, O son of Kunti, attain to my nature at the close of a Kalpa. I create them again at the beginning of a Kalpa. Regulating my own (independent) nature I create again and in this whole assemblage of entities which is plastic in consequence of its subjection to nature. Those acts, however, O Dhananjaya, do not fetter me who sitteth as one unconcerned, being unattached to those acts (of creation). Through me, the overlooker, primal nature produceth the (universe of) mobiles and immobiles. For the reason, O son of Kunti, the universe passeth through its

rounds (of birth and destruction). Not knowing my supreme nature of the great lord of all entities, ignorant people of vain hopes, vain acts, vain knowledge, confounded minds, wedded to the delusive nature of Asuras and Rakshasas, disregard me (as one) that hath assumed a human body. But high-souled ones, O son of Pritha, possessed of divine nature, and with minds directed to nothing else, worship me, knowing (me) to be the origin of all entities and undestructible. Always glorifying me, (or) striving with firm vows, (or) bowing down to me, with reverence and ever devoted, (they) worship me. Others again, performing the sacrifice of knowledge, worship me, (some) as one, (some) as distinct, (some) as pervading the universe, in many forms. I am the Vedic sacrifice, I am the sacrifice enjoined in the Smritis, I am Swadha, I am the medicament produced from herbs; I am the mantra, I am the sacrificial libation, I am the fire, and I am the (sacrificial) offering. I am the father of this universe, the mother, the creator, grandsire; (I am) the thing to be known, the means by which everything is cleaned, the syllable Om, the Rik, the Saman and the Yajus, (I am) the goal, the supporter, the lord, the on-looker, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the source, the destruction, the support, the receptacle, and the undestructible seed. I give heat, I produce and suspend rain; I am immortality, and also death; and I am the existent and the non-existent, O Arjuna. They who know the three branches of knowledge, also drink the Soma juice, and whose sins have been cleansed worshipping me by sacrifices, seek admission into heaven; and these attaining to the sacred region of the chief of the gods, enjoy in heaven the celestial pleasure of the gods. Having enjoyed that celestial world of vast extent, upon exhaustion of their merit they re-enter the mortal world. It is thus that they who accept the doctrines of the three Vedas and wish for objects of desires, obtain going and coming. Those persons who, thinking (of me)

without directing their minds to anything else, worship me, of those who are (thus) always devoted (to me)—I make them gifts and preserve what they have. Even those devotees who, endued with faith, worship other godheads, even they, O son of Kunti, worship me alone, (though) irregularly. I am the enjoyer, as also the lord, of all sacrifices. They, however, do not know me truly; hence they fall off (from heaven). They whose vows are directed to the Pitris attain to the Pitris; who direct (their) worship to the inferior spirits called Bhutas attain to Bhutas; they who worship me, attain even to myself. They who offer me with reverence, leaf, flower, fruit, water—that offered with reverence, I accept from him whose self is pure. Whatever thou dost, whatever eatest, whatever drinkest, whatever givest, whatever austerities thou performest, manage it in such a way, O son of Kunti, that it may be an offering to me. Thus mayst thou be freed from the fetters of action having good and evil fruits. With self endued with renunciation and devotion, thou wilt be released and will come to me. I am alike to all creatures; there is none hateful to me, none dear. They, however, who worship me with reverence are in me and I also am in them. If even a person of exceedingly wicked conduct worshippeth me, without worshipping any one else, he should certainly be regarded as good, for his efforts are well-directed. (Such a person) soon becometh of virtuous soul, and attaineth to eternal tranquillity. Know, O son of Kunti, that none devoted to me is ever lost. For, O son of Pritha, even they who may be of sinful birth, women, Vaisyas, and also Sudras, even they, resorting to me, attain to the supreme goal. What then (shall I say) of holy Brahmanas and saints who are my devotees? Having come to this transient and miserable world, be engaged in my worship. Fix thy mind on me; be my devotee, my worshipper; bow to me; and thus making me thy refuge and applying thy self to abstraction, thou wilt certainly come to me.”

THE OPULENCE OF THE ABSOLUTE

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘Once more still, O mighty-armed one, listen to my supernal words which, from desire of (thy) good, I say unto thee that wouldst be pleased (therewith). The hosts of gods know not my origin, nor the great Rishis, since I am, in every way, the source of the gods and the great Rishis. He that knoweth me as the Supreme Lord of the worlds, without birth and beginning, (he), undeluded among mortals, is free from all sins. Intelligence, knowledge, the absence of delusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, and tranquillity, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, and also security, abstention from harm, evenness of mind, contentment, ascetic austerities, gift, fame, infamy, these several attributes of creatures arise from me. The Seven great Rishis, the four Maharishis before (them), and the Manus, partaking of my nature, were born from my mind, of whom in this world are these offsprings. He that knoweth truly this pre-eminence and mystic power of mine, becometh possessed of unswerving devotion. Of this (there is) no doubt. I am the origin of all things, from me all things proceed. Thinking thus, the wise, endued with my nature, worship me. Their hearts on me, their lives devoted to me, instructing one another, and glorifying me they are ever contented and happy. Unto them always devoted, and worshipping (me) with love, I give that devotion in the form of knowledge by which they come to me. Of them, for

compassion's sake, I destroy the darkness born of ignorance, by the brilliant lamp of knowledge, (myself) dwelling in their souls.'

"Arjuna said, 'Thou art the Supreme Brahma, the Supreme Abode, the Holiest of the Holy, the eternal Male Being Divine, the First of gods Unborn, the Lord. All the Rishis proclaim thee thus, and also the celestial Rishi Narada; and Asita, Devala, (and) Vyasa; thyself also tellest me (so). All this that thou tellest me, O Kesava, I regard as true since, O Holy One, neither the gods nor the Danavas understand thy manifestation. Thou only knowest thyself by thyself. O Best of Male Beings, O Creator of all things; O Lord of all things, O God of gods, O Lord of the Universe, it behoveth thee to declare without any reservation, those divine perfections of thine by which perfections pervading these worlds thou abidest. How shall I, ever meditating, know thee, O thou of mystic powers, in what particular states mayst thou, O Holy One, be meditated upon by me? Do thou again, O Janardana, copiously declare thy mystic powers and (thy) perfections, for I am never satiated with hearing thy nectar-like words.'

"The Holy One said,—'Well, unto thee I will declare my divine perfections, by means of the principal ones (among them), O chief of the Kurus, for there is no end to the extent of my (perfections). I am the soul, O thou of curly hair, seated in the heart of every being, I am the beginning, and the middle, and the end also of all beings. I am Vishnu among the Adityas, the resplendent Sun among all luminous bodies; I am Marichi among the Maruts, and the Moon among constellations. I am the Sama Veda among the Vedas; I am Vasava among the gods; I am the mind among the senses; I am the intellect in (living) beings. I am Sankara among the Rudras, the Lord of treasures among the Yakshas and the Rakshasas; I am Pavaka among the

Vasus, and Meru among the peaked (mountains). Know me, O son of Pritha, to be Vrihaspati, the chief of household priests. I am Skanda among commanders of forces. I am Ocean among receptacles of water. I am Bhrigu among the great Rishis, I am the One, undestructible (syllable Om) among words. Of sacrifices I am the Japa-sacrifice. Of immobiles I am the Himavat. I am the figtree among all trees, I am Narada among the celestial Rishis. I am Chitraratha among the Gandharvas and the ascetic Kapila among ascetics crowned with Yoga success. Know me to be Uchchaisravas among horses, brought forth by (the churning for) nectar, Airavata among princely elephants, and the king among men. Among weapons I am the thunderbolt, among cows I am (she called) Kamadhuk. I am Kandarpa the cause of reproduction, I am Vasuki among serpents. I am Ananta among Nagas, I am Varuna among aquatic beings, I am Aryaman among the Pitris, and Yama among those that judge and punish. I am Prahlada among the Daityas, and Time among things that count. I am the lion among the beasts, and Vinata's son among winged creatures. Of purifiers I am the wind. I am Rama among wielders of weapons. I am the Makara among fishes, and I am Jahnavi (Ganga) among streams. Of created things I am the beginning and the end and also the middle, O Arjuna. I am the knowledge of Supreme Spirit among all kinds of knowledge, and the disputation among disputants. Among all letters I am the letter A, and (the compound called) Dwanda among all compounds. I am also Time Eternal, and I am the Ordainer with face turned on every side. I am Death that seizeth all, and the source of all, that is to be. Among females, I am Fame, Fortune, Speech, Memory, Intelligence, Constancy, Forgiveness. Of the Sama hymns, I am the Vrihat-sama and Gayatri among metres. Of the months, I am Margasirsha, of the seasons (I am) that which is productive of flowers. I am the game of dice of them that cheat, and the splendour of those that are splendid. I am

Victory, I am Exertion, I am the goodness of the good. I am Vasudeva among the Vrishnis, I am Dhananjaya among the sons of Pandu. I am even Vyasa among the ascetics, and Usanas among seers. I am the Rod of those that chastise, I am the Policy of those that seek victory. I am silence among those that are secret. I am the Knowledge of those that are possessed of Knowledge. That which is the Seed of all things, I am that, O Arjuna. There is nothing mobile or immobile, which can exist without me. There is no end, O chastiser of foes, of my divine perfections. This recital of the extent of (those) perfections hath been uttered by me by way (only) of instancing them. Whatever of exalted things (there is) or glorious, or strong, understand thou that everything is born of a portion of my energy. Or rather, what hast thou to do, by knowing all this in detail, O Arjuna? Supporting this entire universe with only a portion (of myself), I stand.”

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THE COSMIC FORM

“Arjuna said,—‘This discourse about the supreme mystery, called Adhyatman, which thou hast uttered for my welfare, hath dispelled my delusion. For I have heard at large from thee of the creation and dissolution of beings, O thou of eyes like lotus petals, and also of thy greatness that knoweth no deterioration. What thou hast said about thyself, O great Lord, is even so. O best of Male Beings, I desire to behold thy sovereign form. If, O Lord, thou thinkest that I am competent to behold that (form), then, O Lord of mystic power, show me thy eternal Self.’

“The Holy One said, ‘Behold, O son of Pritha, my forms by hundreds and thousands, various, divine, diverse in hue and shape. Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Aswins, and the Maruts. Behold, O Bharata, innumerable marvels unseen before (by thee). Behold, O thou of curly hair, the entire universe of mobiles and immobiles, collected together in this body of mine, whatever else thou mayst wish to see. Thou art, however, not competent to behold me with this eye of thine. I give thee celestial sight. Behold my sovereign mystic nature.’”

Sanjaya continued,—“Having said this, O monarch, Hari, the mighty Lord of mystic power, then revealed to the son of Pritha his Supreme sovereign form, with many mouths and eyes, many wondrous aspects, many celestial

ornaments, many celestial weapons uplifted, wearing celestial garlands and robes, (and) with unguents of celestial fragrance, full of every wonder, resplendent, infinite, with faces turned on all sides. If the splendour of a thousand suns were to burst forth at once in the sky, (then) that would be like the splendour of that Mighty One. The son of Pandu then beheld there in the body of that God of gods the entire universe divided and sub-divided into many parts, all collected together. Then Dhananjaya, filled with amazement, (and) with hair standing on end, bowing with (his) head, with joined hands addressed the God.

“Arjuna said, ‘I behold all the gods, O God, as also all the varied hosts of creatures, (and) Brahman seated on (his) lotus seat, and all the Rishis and the celestial snakes. I behold Thee with innumerable arms, stomachs, mouths, (and) eyes, on every side, O thou of infinite forms. Neither end nor middle, nor also beginning of thine do I behold, O Lord of the universe, O thou of universal form. Bearing (thy) diadem, mace, and discus, a mass of energy, glowing on all sides, do I behold thee that art hard to look at, endued on all sides with the effulgence of the blazing fire or the Sun, (and) immeasurable. Thou art indestructible, (and) the Supreme object of this universe. Thou art without decay, the guardian of eternal virtue. I regard thee to be the eternal (male) Being. I behold thee to be without beginning, mean, end, to be of infinite prowess, of innumerable arms, having the Sun and the Moon for thy eyes, the blazing fire for thy mouth, and heating this universe with energy of thy own. For the space betwixt heaven and earth is pervaded by Thee alone, as also all the points of the horizon. At sight of this marvellous and fierce form of thine, O Supreme Soul, the triple world trembleth. For these hosts of gods are entering thee. Some, afraid, are praying with joined hands. Saying Hail to Thee—the hosts of great Rishis and Siddhas praise Thee with copious hymns of praise. The Rudras, the

Adityas, the Vasus, they that (called) the Siddhas, the Viswas, the Aswins, the Maruts, also the Ushmapas, the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, the Asuras, the hosts of Siddhyas, behold Thee and are all amazed. Beholding Thy mighty form with many mouths and eyes, O mighty-armed one, with innumerable arms, thighs and feet, many stomachs, (and) terrible in consequence of many tusks, all creatures are frightened and I also. Indeed, touching the very skies, of blazing radiance, many-hued, mouth wide-open, with eyes that are blazing and large, beholding thee, O Vishnu, with (my) inner soul trembling (in fright), I can no longer command courage and peace of mind. Beholding thy mouths that are terrible in consequence of (their) tusks, and that are fierce (as the all-destroying fire at the end of the Yuga), I cannot recognise the points of the horizon nor can I command peace of mind. Be gracious, O God of gods, O thou that art the refuge of the Universe. And all these sons of Dhritarashtra, together with the hosts of kings, and Bhishma, and Drona, and also this Suta's son (Karna), accompanied by even the principal warriors of our side, are quickly entering thy terrible mouths rendered fierce by thy tusks. Some, with their heads crushed, are seen striking at the interstices of (thy) teeth. As many currents of water flowing through different channels roll rapidly towards the ocean, so these heroes of the world of men enter thy mouths that flame all around. As moths with increasing speed rush for (their own) destruction to the blazing fire, so also do (these) people, with unceasing speed, enter thy mouths for (their) destruction. Swallowing all these men from every side, thou lickest them with thy flaming mouths. Filling the whole universe with (thy) energy, thy fierce splendours, O Vishnu, are heating (everything). Tell me who thou art of (such) fierce form. I bow to thee, O chief of the gods, be gracious to me. I desire to know thee that art the Primeval One, I do not understand thy action.'

“The Holy One said, ‘I am Death, the destroyer of the worlds, fully developed. I am now engaged in slaying the race of men. Without thee all these warriors standing in the different divisions shall cease to be. Wherefore, arise, gain glory, (and) vanquishing the foe, enjoy (this) swelling kingdom. By me have all these been already slain. Be only (my) instrument. O thou that can’st draw the bow with (even) the left hand. Drona and Bhishma, and Jayadratha, and Karna, and also other heroic warriors, (already) slain by me, do thou slay. Be not dismayed, fight; thou shalt conquer in battle (thy) foes.”

Sanjaya continued,—“Hearing these words of Kesava, the diadem-decked (Arjuna), trembling, (and) with joined hands, bowed (unto him); and once more said unto Krishna, with voice choked up and overwhelmed with fear, and making his salutations (to him).—

“Arjuna said, ‘It is meet, Hrishikesa, that the universe is delighted and charmed in uttering thy praise, and the Rakshasas flee in fear in all directions, and the hosts of the Siddhas bow down (to thee). And why should they not bow down to thee, O Supreme Soul, that are greater than even Brahman (himself), and the primal cause? O thou that art Infinite, O God of the gods, O thou that art the refuge of the universe, thou art indestructible, thou art that which is, and that which is not and that which is beyond (both). Thou art the First God, the ancient (male) Being, thou art the Supreme refuge of this universe. Thou art the Knower, thou art the Object to be known, thou art the highest abode. By thee is pervaded this universe, O thou of infinite form. Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Moon, Prajapati, and Grandsire. Obeisance be to thee a thousand times, and again and yet again obeisance to thee. Obeisance to thee in front, and also from behind. Let obeisance be to thee from every side, O thou that art all. Thou art all, of energy that is

infinite, and prowess that is immeasurable. Thou embracest the All. Regarding (thee) a friend whatever hath been said by me carelessly, such as—"O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend,"—not knowing this thy greatness from want of judgement or from love either, whatever disrespect hath been shown thee for purpose of mirth, on occasions of play, lying, sitting, (or) at meals, while alone or in the presence of others, O undeteriorating one, I beg thy pardon for it, that art immeasurable. Thou art the father of this universe of mobiles and immobiles. Thou art the great master deserving of worship. There is none equal to thee, how can there be one greater? O thou whose power is unparalleled in even three worlds? Therefore bowing (to thee) prostrating (my) body, I ask thy grace, O Lord, O adorable one. It behoveth thee, O God, to bear (my faults) as a father (his) son's, a friend (his) friend's, a lover (his) loved one's. Beholding (thy) form (unseen) before, I have been joyful, (yet) my mind hath been troubled, with fear. Show me that (other ordinary) form, O God. Be gracious, O Lord of the gods, O thou that art the refuge of the universe. (Decked) in diadem, and (armed) with mace, discus in hand, as before, I desire to behold thee. Be of that same four-armed form, O thou of a thousand arms, thou of universal form.'

"The Holy One said, 'Pleased with thee, O Arjuna, I have, by my (own) mystic power, shown thee this supreme form, full of glory, Universal, Infinite, Primeval, which hath been seen before by none save thee. Except by thee alone, hero of Kuru's race, I cannot be seen in this form in the world of men by any one else, (aided) even by the study of the Vedas and of sacrifices, by gifts, by actions, (or) by the severest austerities. Let no fear be thine, nor perplexity of mind at seeing this awful form of mine. Freed from fear with a joyful heart, thou again see Me assuming that other form.'"

Sanjaya continued,—“Vasudeva, having said all this to Arjuna, once more showed (him) his own (ordinary) form, and that High-Souled one, assuming once more (his) gentle form, comforted him who had been afflicted.”

“Arjuna said, ‘Beholding this gentle human form of thine, O Janardana, I have now become of right mind and have come to my normal state.’

“The Holy One said, ‘This form of mine which thou hast seen is difficult of being seen. Even the gods are always desirous of becoming spectators of this (my) form. Not by the Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifices, can I be seen in this form of mine which thou hast seen. By reverence, however, that is exclusive (in its objects), O Arjuna, I can in this form be known, seen truly, and attained to, O chastiser of foes. He who doth everything for me, who hath me for his supreme object, who is freed from attachment, who is without enmity towards all beings, even he, O Arjuna, cometh to me.’”

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THE WAY OF DEVOTION

“Arjuna said, ‘Of those worshippers who, constantly devoted, adore thee, and those who (meditate) on thee as the Immutable and Unmanifest, who are best acquainted with devotion?’

“The Holy One said, ‘Fixing (their) mind on me, they that constantly adore me, being endued (besides) with the highest faith, are deemed by me to be the most devoted. They, however, who worship the Immutable, the Unmanifest, the All-pervading, the Inconceivable, the Indifferent, the Immutable, the Eternal, who, restraining the entire group of the senses, are equal-minded in respect of all around and are engaged in the good of all creatures, (also) attain to me. The trouble is the greater for those whose minds are fixed on the Unmanifest; for the path to the Unmanifest is hard to find by those that are embodied. They (again) who, reposing all action on me (and) regarding me as their highest object (of attainment), worship me, meditating on me with devotion undirected to anything else, of them whose minds are (thus) fixed on me, I, without delay, become the deliverer from the ocean of (this) mortal world. Fix thy heart on me alone, place thy understanding on me, Hereafter then shalt thou dwell in me. (There is) no doubt (in this). If however, thou art unable to fix thy heart steadily on me, then, O Dhananjaya, strive to obtain me by

devotion (arising) from continuous application. If thou beest unequal to even (this) continuous application, then let actions performed for me be thy highest aim. Even performing all thy acts for my sake, thou wilt obtain perfection. If even this thou art unable to do, then resorting to devotion in me, (and) subduing thy soul, abandon the fruit of all actions. Knowledge is superior to application (in devotion); meditation is better than knowledge; the abandonment of the fruit of reaction (is better) than meditation; and tranquillity (results) immediately from abandonment. He who hath no hatred for any creature, who is friendly and compassionate also, who is free from egoism, who hath no vanity, attachment, who is alike in pleasure and pain, who is forgiving, contented, always devoted, of subdued soul, firm of purpose, with heart and understanding fixed on me, even he is dear to me. He through whom the world is not troubled, (and) who is not troubled by the world, who is free from joy, wrath, fear and anxieties, even he is dear to me. That devotee of mine who is unconcerned, pure, diligent, unconnected (with worldly objects), and free from distress (of mind), and who renounceth every action (for fruit), even he is dear to me. He who hath no joy, no aversion, who neither grieveth nor desireth, who renounceth both good and evil, (and) who is full of faith in me, even he is dear to me. He who is alike to friend and foe, as also in honour and dishonour, who is alike in cold and heat, (and pleasure and pain), who is free from attachment, to whom censure and praise are equal, who is taciturn, who is contented with anything that cometh (to him), who is homeless, of steady mind and full of faith, even that man is dear to me. They who resort to this righteousness (leading to) immortality which hath been (already) declared,—those devotees full of faith and regarding me as the highest object (of their acquisition) are the dearest to me.”

THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN MATTER AND SPIRIT

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘This body, O son of Kunti, is called Kshetra. Him who knoweth it, the learned call Kshetrajna. Know me, O Bharata, to be Kshetras. The knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna I regard to be (true) knowledge. What that Kshetra (is), and what (it is) like, and what changes it undergoes, and whence (it comes), what is he (viz., Kshetrajna), and what his powers are, hear from me in brief. All this hath in many ways been sung separately, by Rishis in various verses, in well-settled texts fraught with reason and giving indications of Brahman. The great elements, egoism, intellect, the unmanifest (viz., Prakriti), also the ten senses, the one (manas), the five objects of sense, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, body consciousness, courage,—all this in brief hath been declared to be Kshetra in its modified form. Absence of vanity, absence of ostentation, abstention from injury, forgiveness, uprightness, devotion to preceptor, purity, constancy, self-restraint, indifference to objects of sense, absence of egoism, perception of the misery and evil of birth, death, decrepitude and disease, freedom from attachment, absence of sympathy for son, wife, home, and the rest, and constant equanimity of heart on attainment of good and evil, unswerving devotion to me without meditation on anything else, frequenting of lonely places, distaste for

concourse of men, constancy in the knowledge of the relation of the individual self to the supreme, perception of the object of the knowledge of truth,—all this is called Knowledge; all that which is contrary to this is Ignorance. That which is the object of knowledge I will (now) declare (to thee), knowing which one obtaineth immortality. [It is] the Supreme Brahma having no beginning, who is said to be neither existent nor non-existent; whose hands and feet are on all sides, whose eyes, heads and faces are on all sides, who dwells pervading everything in the world, who is possessed of all the qualities of the senses (though) devoid of the senses, without attachment (yet) sustaining all things, without attributes (yet) enjoying (a) all attributes, without and within all creatures, immobile and mobile, not knowable because of (his) subtlety, remote yet near, undistributed in all beings, (yet) remaining as if distributed, who is the sustainer of (all) beings, the absorber and the creator (of all); who is the light of all luminous bodies, who is said to be beyond all darkness; who is knowledge, the Object of knowledge, the End of knowledge and seated in the hearts of all. Thus Kshetra, and Knowledge, and the Object of Knowledge, have been declared (to thee) in brief. My devotee, knowing (all) this, becomes one in spirit with me. Know that Nature and Spirit are both without beginning (and) know (also) that all modifications and all qualities spring from Nature. Nature is said to be the source of the capacity of enjoying pleasures and pains. For Spirit, dwelling in nature enjoyeth the qualities born of Nature. The cause of its births in good or evil wombs is (its) connection with the qualities. The Supreme Purusha in this body is said to be surveyor, approver, supporter, enjoyer, the mighty lord, and also the Supreme Soul. He who thus knows Spirit, and Nature, with the qualities, in whatever state he may be, is never born again. Some by meditation behold the self in the self by the self; others by devotion according to the Sankhya system;

and others (again), by devotion through works. Others yet not knowing this, worship, hearing of it from others. Even these, devoted to what is heard, cross over death. Whatever entity, immobile or mobile, cometh into existence, know that, O bull of Bharata's race, to be from the connection of Kshetra and Kshetrajna (matter and spirit). He seeth the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in the Perishable. For seeing the Lord dwelling alike everywhere, one doth not destroy himself by himself, and then reacheth the highest goal. He seeth (truly) who seeth all actions to be wrought by nature alone in every way and the self likewise to be not the doer. When one seeth the diversity of entities as existing in one, and the issue (everything) from that (One), then is one said to attain to Brahma. This inexhaustible Supreme Self, O son of Kunti, being without beginning and without attributes, doth not act, nor is stained even when stationed in the body. As space, which is ubiquitous, is never, in consequence of its subtlety tainted, so the soul, stationed in every body, is never tainted. As the single Sun lights up the entire world, so the Spirit, O Bharata, lights up the entire (sphere of) matters. They that, by the eye of knowledge, know the distinction between matter and spirit, and the deliverance from the nature of all entities, attain to the Supreme.”

THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE THREE QUALITIES

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘I will again declare (to thee) that supernal science of sciences, that excellent science, knowing which all the munis have attained to the highest perfection from (the fetters of) this body. Resorting to this science, and attaining to my nature, they are not reborn even on (the occasion of) a (new) creation and are not disturbed at the universal dissolution. The mighty Brahma is a womb for me. Therein I place the (living) germ. Thence, O Bharata, the birth of all beings taketh place. Whatever (bodily) forms, O son of Kunti, are born in all wombs, of them Brahma is the mighty womb, (and) I the seed-imparting Sire. Goodness, passion, darkness, these qualities, born of nature, bind down, O thou of mighty arms, the eternal embodied [soul] in the body. Amongst these, Goodness, from its unsullied nature, being enlightening and free from misery, bindeth (the soul), O sinless one, with the attainment of happiness and of knowledge. Know that passion, having desire for its essence, is born of thirst and attachment. That, O son of Kunti, bindeth the embodied (soul) by the attachment of work. Darkness, however, know, is born of ignorance, (and) bewilders all embodied [soul]. That bindeth, O Bharata, by error, indolence, and sleep. Goodness uniteth (the soul) with pleasure; Passion, O Bharata, uniteth with work; but

darkness, veiling knowledge, uniteth with error. Passion and darkness, being repressed, Goodness remaineth, O Bharata. Passion and goodness (being repressed), darkness (remaineth); (and) darkness and goodness (being repressed), passion (remaineth). When in this body, in all its gates, the light of knowledge is produced, then should one know that goodness hath been developed there. Avarice, activity, performance of works, want of tranquillity, desire,—these, O bull of Bharata's race, are born when passion is developed. Gloom, inactivity, error, and delusion also,—these, O son of Kuru's race, are born when darkness is developed. When the holder of a body goeth to dissolution while goodness is developed, then he attaineth to the spotless regions of those that know the Supreme. Going to dissolution when passion prevails, one is born among those that are attached to work. Likewise, dissolved during darkness, one is born in wombs that beget the ignorant. The fruit of good action is said to be good and untainted. The fruit, however, of passion, is misery; (and) the fruit of Darkness is ignorance. From goodness is produced knowledge; from passion, avarice; (and) from darkness are error and delusion, and also ignorance. They that dwell in goodness go on high; they that are addicted to passion dwell in the middle; (while) they that are of darkness, being addicted to the lowest quality, go down. When an observer recognises none else to be an agent save the qualities, and knows that which is beyond (the qualities), he attaineth to my nature. The embodied [soul], by transcending these three qualities which constitute the source of all bodies, enjoyeth immortality, being freed from birth, death, decrepitude, and misery.'

“Arjuna said, ‘What are indications, O Lord, of one who hath transcended these three qualities? What is his conduct? How also doth one transcend these three qualities?’

“The Holy One said, ‘He who hath no aversion for light, activity, and even delusion, O son of Pandu, when they are present, nor desireth them when they are absent, who, seated as one unconcerned, is not shaken by those qualities; who sitteth and moveth not, thinking that it is the qualities (and not he) that are engaged (in their respective functions); to whom pain and pleasure are alike, who is self-contained, and to whom a sod of earth, a stone, and gold are alike; to whom the agreeable and the disagreeable are the same; who hath discernment; to whom censure and praise are the same; to whom honour and dishonour are the same; who regardeth friend and foe alike; who hath renounced all exertion—is said to have transcended the qualities. He also who worshipping Me with exclusive devotion, he, transcending those qualities, becometh fit for admission into the nature of Brahma. For I am the stay of Brahma, of immortality, of undestructibility, of eternal piety, and of unbroken felicity.”

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THE SUPREME SELF

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘They say that the Aswattha, having its roots above and branches below, is eternal, its leaves are the Chhandas. He who knoweth it, knoweth the Vedas. Downwards and upwards are stretched its branches which are enlarged by the qualities; its sprouts are the objects of senses. Downwards its roots, leading to action, are extended to this world of men. Its form cannot here (below) be thus known, nor (its) end, nor (its) beginning, nor (its) support. Cutting, with the hard weapon of unconcern, this Aswattha of roots firmly fixed, then should one seek for that place repairing whither one returneth not again (thinking)—“I will seek the protection of that Primeval Sire from whom the ancient course of (worldly) life hath flowed.”—Those that are free from pride and delusion, that have subdued the evil of attachment, that are steady in the contemplation of the relation of the Supreme to the individual self, from whom desire hath departed, freed from the pairs of opposites known by the names of pleasure and pain (and the like), repair, undeluded, to that eternal seat. The sun lighteth not that [seat], nor the moon, nor fire. Whither going none returneth, that is my supreme seat. An eternal portion of Me is that which, becoming an individual soul in the world of life, draweth to itself the (five) senses with the mind as the sixth which all depend on nature. When the sovereign (of this bodily frame) assumeth

or quittance (a) body, it departeth taking away these, like the wind (taking away) perfumes from their seats. Presiding over the ear, the eye, (the organs of) touch, taste, and smell, and also over the mind, he enjoyeth all objects of senses. They that are deluded do not see (him) when quitting or abiding in (the body), when enjoying or joined to the qualities. They (however) see that have the eye of knowledge. Devotees exerting (towards that end) behold him dwelling in themselves. They (however) that are senseless and whose minds are not restrained, behold him not, even while exerting (themselves). That splendour dwelling in the sun which illumines the vast universe, that (which is) in the moon, and that (which is) in the fire, know that splendour to be mine. Entering into the earth I uphold creatures by my force; and becoming the juicy moon I nourish all herbs. Myself becoming the vital heat (Vaiswanara) residing in the bodies of creatures that breathe, (and) uniting with the upward and the downward life-breaths, I digest the four kinds of food. I am seated in the hearts of all. From Me are memory and knowledge and the loss of both. I am the objects of knowledge to be known by (the aid of) all the Vedas. I am the author of the Vedantas, and I alone am the knower of the Vedas. There are these two entities in the world, viz., the mutable and the immutable. The mutable is all (these) creatures. The unchangeable one is called the immutable. But there is another, the Supreme Being, called Paramatman, who was the Eternal Lord, pervading the three worlds, sustaineth (them) (and) since I transcend the mutable, and am higher than even the immutable; for this I am celebrated in the world (among men) and in the Veda as Purushottama (the Highest Being). He who, without being deluded, knoweth Me as this Highest Being,—he knowing all, O Bharata, worshippeth Me in every way. Thus, O sinless one, hath this knowledge, forming the greatest of mysteries, been declared by Me (to thee). Knowing this, O Bharata, one will

become gifted with intelligence, and will have done all he needs do.”

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THE DIVINE AND THE DEMONIC

“**T**he Holy One said, ‘Fearlessness, purity of heart, perseverance in (the pursuit of) knowledge and Yoga meditation, gifts, self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the Vedas, ascetic penances, uprightness, abstention from injury, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from reporting other’s faults, compassion for all creatures, absence of covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of restlessness, vigour, forgiveness, firmness, cleanliness, absence of quarrelsomeness, freedom from vanity,—these become his, O Bharata, who is born to godlike possessions. Hypocrisy, pride, conceit, wrath, rudeness and ignorance, are, O son of Pritha, his who is born to demoniac possessions. God-like possessions are deemed to be for deliverance; the demoniac for bondage. Grieve not, O son of Pandu, for thou art born to god-like possessions. (There are) two kinds of created beings in this world, viz., the god-like and the demoniac. The god-like have been described at length. Hear now, from me, O son of Pritha, about the demoniac. Persons of demoniac nature know not inclination or disinclination. Neither purity, nor good conduct, nor truth exist in them. They say that the universe is void of truth, of guiding principle, (and) of ruler; produced by the union of one another (male and female) from lust, and nothing else. Depending on this view, these men of lost selves, little

intelligence, and fierce deeds, these enemies (of the world), are born for the destruction of the universe. Cherishing desires that are insatiable, and endued with hypocrisy, conceit and folly, they adopt false notions through delusion and engage in unholy practices. Cherishing boundless thoughts limited by death (alone), and regarding the enjoyment of (their) desires as the highest end, they are persuaded that that is all. Fettered by the hundred nooses of hope, addicted to lust and wrath, they covet to obtain this wealth to-day,—This I will obtain later,—This wealth I have,—This (wealth) will be mine in addition,—This foe hath been slain by me,—I will slay even others,—I am lord,—I am the enjoyer,—I am successful, powerful, happy,—I am rich and of noble birth,—Who else is there that is like me?—I will sacrifice,—I will make gifts,—I will be merry,—thus deluded by ignorance, tossed about by numerous thoughts, enveloped in the meshes of delusion, attached to the enjoyment of objects of desire, they sink into foul hell. Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices that are nominally so, with hypocrisy and against the (prescribed) ordinance. Wedded to vanity, power, pride, lust and wrath, these revilers hate Me in their own bodies and those of others. These haters (of Me), cruel, the vilest among men, and unholy, I hurl continually down into demoniac wombs. Coming into demoniac wombs, deluded birth after birth, they, O son of Kunti, without attaining to Me go down to the vilest state. Three-fold is the way to hell, ruinous to the self, viz., lust, wrath, likewise avarice. Therefore, these three, one should renounce. Freed from these three gates of darkness, a man, O son of Kunti, works out his own welfare, and then repairs to his highest goal. He who, abandoning the ordinances of the scriptures, acts only under the impulses of desire, never attains to perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal. Therefore, the scriptures should be thy authority in determining what should be

done and what should not be done. It behoveth thee to do work here, having ascertained what hath been declared by the ordinances of the scriptures.”

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THE THREE TYPES OF FAITH

“Arjuna said, ‘What is the state, O Krishna, of those who abandoning the ordinance of the scriptures, perform sacrifices endued with faith? It is one of Goodness, or Passion, or Darkness?’

“The Holy One said, ‘The faith of embodied (creatures) is of three kinds. It is (also) born of their (individual) natures. It is good, passionate, and dark. Hear now these. The faith of one, O Bharata, is conformable to his own nature. A being here is full of faith; and whatever is one’s faith, one is even that. They that are of the quality of goodness worship the gods; they that are of the quality of passion (worship) the Yakshas and the Rakshasas; other people that are of the quality of darkness worship departed spirits and hosts of Bhutas. Those people who practise severe ascetic austerities not ordained by the scriptures, are given up to hypocrisy and pride, and endued with desire of attachment, and violence,—those persons possessed of no discernment, torturing the groups of organs in (their) bodies and Me also seated within (those) bodies,—should be known to be of demoniac resolves. Food which is dear to all is of three kinds. Sacrifice, penance, and gifts are likewise (of three kinds). Listen to their distinctions as follows. Those kinds of food that increase life’s period, energy, strength, health, well-being, and joy, which are

savoury, oleaginous, nutritive, and agreeable, are liked by God. Those kinds of food which are bitter, sour, salted, over-hot, pungent, dry, and burning, and which produce pain, grief and disease, are desired by the passionate. The food which is cold, without savour, stinking and corrupt, and which is even refuse, and filthy, is dear to men of darkness. That sacrifice is good which, being prescribed by the ordinance, is performed by persons, without any longing for the fruit (thereof) and the mind being determined (to it under the belief) that its performance is a duty. But that which is performed in expectation of fruit and even for the sake of ostentation, know that sacrifice, O chief of the sons of Bharata, to be of the quality of passion. That sacrifice which is against the ordinance, in which no food is dealt out, which is devoid of mantras (sacred verse), in which no fees are paid to the brahmanas assisting to it, and which is void of faith, is said to be of the quality of darkness. Reverence to the gods, regenerate ones, preceptors, and men of knowledge, purity, uprightness, the practices of a Brahmacharin, and abstention from injury, are said to constitute the penance of the body. The speech which causeth no agitation, which is true, which is agreeable and beneficial, and the diligent study of the Vedas, are said to be the penance of speech. Serenity of the mind, gentleness, taciturnity, self-restraint, and purity of the disposition,—these are said to be the penance of the mind. This three-fold penance performed with perfect faith, by men without desire of fruit, and with devotion, is said to be of the quality of goodness. That penance which is performed for the sake of (gaining) respect, honour, and reverence, with hypocrisy, (and) which is unstable and transient is said to be of the quality of passion. That penance which is performed under a deluded conviction, with torture of one's self, and for the destruction of another, is said to be of the quality of darkness. That gift which is given because it ought to be given, to one who

cannot return any service for it, in a proper time, and to a proper person, is said to be of the quality of goodness. That, however, which is given reluctantly, for return of services (past or expected), or even with an eye to fruit,—that gift is said to be of the quality of passion. In an unfit place and at an unfit time, the gift that is made to an unworthy object, without respect, and with contempt, is said to be of the quality of darkness. OM, TAT, SAT, this is said to be the three-fold designation of Brahma. By that (Brahma), the Brahmanas and the Vedas, and the Sacrifices, were ordained of old. Therefore, uttering the syllable OM, the sacrifices, gifts, and penances, prescribed by the ordinance, of all utterers of Brahma begin. Uttering TAT, the various rites of sacrifice, penance, and gifts, without expectation of fruit, are performed by those that are desirous of deliverance. SAT is employed to denote existence and goodness. Likewise, O son of Pritha, the word SAT is used in any auspicious act. Constancy in sacrifices, in penances and in gifts, is also called SAT, and an act, too, for the sake of That is called SAT. Whatever oblation is offered (to the fire), whatever is given away, whatever penance is performed, whatever is done, without faith, is, O son of Pritha, said to be the opposite of SAT; and that is nought both here and hereafter.”

THE LIBERATION

“Arjuna said, ‘Of renunciation, O thou of mighty arms, I desire to know the true nature, and also of abandonment, O lord of the senses distinctly, O slayer of Kesi.’

“The Holy One said, ‘The rejection of the works with desire is known by the learned as renunciation. The abandonment of the fruit of all work, the discerning call abandonment. Some wise men say that work (itself) should be abandoned as evil; others (say) that the works of sacrifice, gifts, and penance, should not be abandoned. As to that abandonment, listen to my decision, O best of the sons of Bharata, for abandonment, O tiger among men, hath been declared to be of three kinds. The works of sacrifice, gifts, and penance should not be abandoned. They should, indeed, be done. Sacrifice, gift, and penance, are the purifications of the wise. But even those works should be done, abandoning attachment and fruit. This, O son of Pritha, is my excellent and decided opinion. The renunciation of an act prescribed (in the scriptures) is not proper. Its abandonment (is) from delusion, (and) is (therefore,) declared to be of the quality of darkness. (Regarding it) as (a source of) sorrow, when work is abandoned from (fear of) bodily pain, one making such an abandonment which is of the quality of passion never obtaineth the fruit of abandonment. (Regarding it) as one

that should be done, when work that is prescribed (in the scriptures) is done, O Arjuna, abandoning attachment and fruit also, that abandonment is deemed to be of the quality of goodness. Possessed of intelligence and with doubts dispelled, an abandoner that is endowed with the quality of goodness hath no aversion for an unpleasant action and no attachment to pleasant (ones). Since actions cannot be absolutely abandoned by an embodied person, (therefore) he who abandons the fruit of actions is truly said to be an abandoner. Evil, good and mixed-action hath (this) three-fold fruit hereafter for those that do not abandon. But there is none whatever for the renouncer. Listen from me, O thou of mighty arms, to those five causes for the completion of all actions, declared in the Sankhya treating of the annihilation of actions. (They are) substratum, agent, the diverse kinds of organs, the diverse efforts severally, and with them the deities as the fifth. With body, speech, or mind, whatever work, just or the reverse, a man undertakes, these five are its causes. That being so, he that, owing to an unrefined understanding, beholdeth his own self as solely the agent, he, dull in mind, beholdeth not. He that hath no feeling of egoism, whose mind is not sullied, he, even killing all these people, killeth not, nor is fettered (by action).—Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower, form the three-fold impulse of action. Instrument, action, and the agent, form the three-fold complement of action. Knowledge, action, and agent, are declared in the enumeration of qualities to be three-fold, according to the difference of qualities. Listen to those also duly. That by which One Eternal Essence is viewed in all things, undivided in the divided, know that to be knowledge having the quality of goodness. That knowledge which discerneth all things as diverse essences of different kinds in consequence of their separateness, know that that knowledge hath the quality of passion. But that which is attached to (each) single object as if it were the whole,

which is without reason, without truth, and mean, that knowledge hath been said to be of the quality of darkness. The action which is prescribed (by the scriptures), (done) without attachment, performed without desires and aversion, by one who longeth not for (its) fruit, is said to be of the quality of goodness. But that action which is done by one seeking objects of desire, or by one filled with egoism, and which is attended with great trouble, is said to be of the quality of passion. That action which is undertaken from delusion, without regard to consequences, loss, injury (to others), and (one's own) power also, is said to be of the quality of passion. The agent who is free from attachment, who never speaketh of himself, who is endued with constancy and energy, and is unmoved by success and defeat, is said to be of the quality of goodness. The agent who is full of affections, who wisheth for the fruit of actions, who is covetous, endued with cruelty, and impure, and who feeleth joy and sorrow, is declared to be of the quality of passion. The agent who is void of application, without discernment, obstinate, deceitful, malicious, slothful, desponding, and procrastinating, is said to be of the quality of darkness. Hear now, O Dhananjaya, the three-fold division of intellect and constancy, according to their qualities, which I am about to declare exhaustively and distinctly. The intellect which knoweth action and inaction, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and deliverance, is, O son of Pritha, of the quality of goodness. The intellect by which one imperfectly discerneth right and wrong, that which ought to be done and that which ought not to be done, is, O son of Pritha, of the quality of passion. That intellect which, shrouded by darkness, regardeth wrong to be right, and all things as reversed, is, O son of Pritha, of the quality of darkness. That unswerving constancy by which one controls the functions of the mind, the life-breaths, and the senses, through devotion, that constancy,

is, O son of Pritha, of the quality of goodness. But that constancy, O Arjuna, by which one holds to religion, desire, and profit, through attachment, desiring fruit, that constancy, O son of Pritha, is of the quality of passion. That through which an undiscerning person abandons not sleep, fear, sorrow, despondency, and folly, that constancy is deemed to be of the quality of darkness. Hear now from me, O bull of Bharata's race, of the three kinds of happiness. That in which one findeth pleasure from repetition (of enjoyment), which bringeth an end to pain, which is like poison first but resembleth nectar in the end, that happiness born of the serenity produced by a knowledge of self, is said to be of the quality of goodness. That which is from the contact of the senses with their objects which resembleth nectar first but is like poison in the end, that happiness is held to be of the quality of passion. That happiness which in the beginning and its consequences deludeth the soul, and springeth from sleep, indolence, and stupidity, that is described to be of the quality of darkness. There is not, either on earth or heaven among the gods, the entity that is free from these three qualities born of nature. The duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, and of Sudras also, O chastiser of foes, are distinguished by (these three) qualities born of nature. Tranquillity, self-restraint, ascetic austerities, purity, forgiveness, rectitude, knowledge, experience, and belief (in an existence hereafter),—these are the duties of Brahmanas, born of (their proper) nature. Bravery, energy, firmness, skill, not flying away from battle, liberality, the bearing of a ruler,—these are the duties of Kshatriyas, born of (their proper) nature. Agriculture, tending of cattle, and trade, are the natural duties of Vaisyas. Of Sudras also, the natural duty consists in servitude. Every man, engaged in his own duties, attains to perfection. Hear now how one obtains perfection by application to his duties. Him from whom are the movements of all beings, Him by whom all this is

pervaded, worshipping him by (the performance of) one's own duty, one obtaineth perfection. Better is one's own duty though performed faultily than another's duty well-performed. Performing the duty prescribed by (one's own) nature, one incurreth no sin. One must not abandon, O son of Kunti, one's natural duty though tainted with evil, for all actions are enveloped by evil like fire by smoke. He whose mind is unattached everywhere, who hath subdued his self, and whose desire hath departed, obtaineth, through renunciation, the supreme perfection of freedom from work. Learn from me, only in brief, O son of Kunti, how one, having obtained (this kind of) perfection, attaineth to Brahma which is the supreme end of knowledge. Endued with a pure mind, and restraining his self by constancy, renouncing sound and other objects of sense, and casting off affection and aversion, he who resideth in a lonely place, eateth little, and restraineth speech, body, and mind, who is ever intent on meditation and abstraction, who hath recourse to indifference, who, abandoning egoism, violence, pride, lust, wrath, and (all) surroundings, hath been freed from selfishness and is tranquil (in mind), becometh fit for assimilation with Brahma. Becoming one with Brahma, tranquil in spirit, (such a) one grieveth not, desireth not; alike to all beings, he obtaineth the highest devotion to Me. By (that) devotion he truly understandeth Me. What I am, and who I am; then understanding Me truly, he entereth into Me forthwith. Even performing all actions at all times having refuge in Me, he obtaineth, through my favour, the seat that is eternal and imperishable. Dedicating in thy heart all actions to Me, being devoted to Me, resorting to mental abstraction, fix thy thoughts constantly on Me. Fixing thy thoughts on Me, thou wilt surmount all difficulties through my grace. But if from self-conceit thou wilt not listen, thou wilt (then) utterly perish. If, having recourse to self-conceit, thou thinkest—I will not fight,—that resolution of thine would be vain, (for) Nature will

constrain thee. That which, from delusion, thou dost not wish to do, thou wilt do involuntarily, bound by thy own duty springing from (thy own) nature. The Lord, O Arjuna, dwelleth in the region of the heart of beings, turning all beings as if mounted on a machine, by his illusive power. Seek shelter with Him in every way, O Bharata. Through his grace thou wilt obtain supreme tranquillity, the eternal seat. Thus hath been declared to thee by Me the knowledge that is more mysterious than any (other) matter. Reflecting on it fully, act as thou likest. Once more, listen to my supernal words, the most mysterious of all. Exceedingly dear art thou to Me, therefore, I will declare what is for thy benefit. Set thy heart on Me, become My devotee, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me. Then shalt thou come to Me. I declare to thee truly, (for) thou art dear to Me. Forsaking all (religious) duties, come to Me as thy sole refuge. I will deliver thee from all sins. Do not grieve. This is not to be ever declared by thee to one who practiseth no austerities, to one who is not a devotee, to one who never waiteth on a preceptor, nor yet to one who calumniateth Me. He who shall inculcate this supreme mystery to those that are devoted to Me, offering Me the highest devotion, will come to Me, freed from (all his) doubts. Amongst men there is none who can do Me a dearer service than he, nor shall any other on earth be dearer to Me than he. And he who will study this holy converse between us, by him will have been offered to Me the sacrifice of knowledge. Such is my opinion. Even the man who, with faith and without cavil, will hear it (read), even he freed (from re-birth), will obtain of the blessed regions of those that perform pious acts. Hath this, O son of Pritha, been heard by thee with mind undirected to any other objects? Hath thy delusion, (caused) by ignorance, been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?

“Arjuna said, ‘My delusion hath been destroyed, and the recollection (of what I am) hath been gained by me, O

Undeteriorating one, through thy favour. I am now firm. My doubts have been dispelled. I will do thy bidding.”

Sanjaya continued, “Thus I heard this converse between Vasudeva and the high-souled son of Pritha, (that is) wonderful and causeth the hair to stand on end. Through Vyasa’s favour heard I this supreme mystery, this (doctrine of) Yoga, from Krishna himself, the Lord of Yoga, who declared it in person. O King recollecting and (again) recollecting this wonderful (and) holy converse of Kesava and Arjuna, I rejoice over and over again. Recollecting again and again that wonderful form also of Hari, great is my amazement, O king, and I rejoice ever more. Thither where Krishna, the Lord of Yoga (is), thither where the great bowman (Partha) is, thither, in my opinion, are prosperity, and victory, and greatness, and eternal justice.”

END OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

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